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Cupertino City Hall
10300 Torre Ave
Cupertino, CA 95014

Dear Mayor Paul, Vice Mayor Sinks, Councilmembers Vaidhyanathan, Chang, and Scharf, and City Manager Chan,

The Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury released a report, “Affordable Housing Crisis: Density is our Destiny,” on June 21, 2018, which issued a clarion call that “affordable housing is the issue of the day in Santa Clara County” and that “drastic action is long overdue.” The solutions it outlines are a path to more higher-density housing in general, and more affordable housing in particular. The report makes clear that, as this is a problem that affects people throughout the county, the response must come from all our cities, governmental entities, and the County’s largest employers. Action needs to reflect a sense of urgency at the local level, with new policies and stepped-up commitments, but it also needs to come through better regional coordination and collaboration. This is a shared crisis, a shared challenge, and must engender a collective response.

We appreciate the City’s timely response to the Grand Jury’s request to address specific findings and recommendations. As the staff response catalogues, many of the findings are well known to the City, and many of the recommendations have been integrated into policy. Most recently, of course, Cupertino has experienced the local challenge of community support for large scale high-density development, even as it moves towards approval of just the type of solution we believe is envisioned by the report. What the Grand Jury is clearly calling for, however, is a sustained commitment to long-term solutions. It would be a shame to allow the opportunity presented by this Report to pass us by without more forcefully committing to clear, impactful actions.

Some of the most important recommendations of the Grand Jury Report are for cities to better coordinate in keeping affordable housing high on the agenda, and finding regional solutions where possible. We are pleased that the City is taking up the issue of the RHNA sub-region, and the regional discussion about barriers to meeting RHNA targets. We expect Cupertino to be an active and important partner in these regional discussions.

On the city level, the Vallco Specific Plan process offers a significant chance for Cupertino to make progress on its housing goals. The Charities Housing senior housing project that broke ground earlier this year, cited by staff in the City’s response, is also important in that it will provide 18 homes for vulnerable seniors. At the same time, it is emblematic of the challenges of community resistance, high costs, and slow processes that hamper the development of much-needed affordable housing projects in Cupertino. SV@Home looks forward to being part of overdue discussions on how to

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increase the funds the City collects for the production of affordable housing and more rapidly convert those funds into actual homes for those who are in the most need.

We are all in this housing crisis together and all jurisdictions need to do their part. SV@Home stands ready to continue to work closely with Cupertino to meet our shared commitments.

Sincerely,



Pilar Lorenzana
Deputy Director